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Retranslations of Holy Scriptures:
Why Keep Translating the Bible?

Lourens de Vries*

1. Introduction

The topic of this article is the phenomenon of the many retranslations of the Bible. Why would people make yet another translation of the Bible in English, or Korean or Dutch? Which needs and motivations drive this aspect of Christianity, now and in the history of Bible translation? In order to deal with that question of the continuing retranslation of the Bible, I will look at the issue first from an historical perspective, second from the perspective of Christian communities today, and third from a theological perspective.

The historical perspective is important because it helps to understand the roots of the Christian tradition to translate and retranslate the Word of God over and over again. In fact, I will argue that Christianity from its very beginning was a translational religion, building on the translational traditions of Hellenistic Jewish communities and their sacred literature.

The perspective of today is also needed because we do not retranslate the Bible just because it is our tradition to do so. We need to ask ourselves how we relate to that heritage and how we pass it on to new generations. Ultimately, the

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issue of retranslating Holy Scripture is a theological and spiritual one, with its roots in biblical theologies of Scripture.

2. Roots and beginnings: an historical perspective

Christianity started with a Jewish rabbi and His twelve disciples.[1] They were Jews in the first century in a Greco-Roman world at the time when there were many different Jewish theological and political factions and various Jewish faith communities that differed a lot from each other. The New Testament speaks of that religious diversity in Hellenistic Judaism, for example the Sadducees and Pharisees, with charismatic rabbis, political revolutionaries or communities that withdrew into the desert for a life of quiet and austere contemplation. There were Jewish communities all over the Greco-Roman world, in the Diaspora where the knowledge of Hebrew or even Aramaic gradually was lost and had given way to koine Greek, the common language in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD the picture of Jewish religious diversity that we see reflected in the New Testament writings changes. The Jews lost the ritual, sacrificial priestly center of the Temple in Jerusalem. Many Palestinian Jews fled to the Diaspora communities in Alexandria, Rome, Greece, Asia Minor, or the Arab Peninsula. The Torah, the Prophets and the Writings now became the center of their religion and their liturgy, replacing the Temple and its sacrificial rites. Judaism developed more and more into a text-centered religion with the Hebrew Scrolls at the liturgical center and with a very prominent role for the rabbis who could read and explain the Hebrew Scrolls, replacing the priestly political elites of Jerusalem in spiritual, social and political leadership roles. These scrolls became objects of veneration, the center of the liturgy and

1) Section 2 is based on materials found in Philip A. Noss, ed., *A History of Bible Translation* (Rome: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 2007), especially in chapters 3 (David Burke), and 12 (Harry Sysling), and the helpful summary of early Christian translation history of Breed (Brennan Breed, "What Are the Earliest Versions and Translations of the Bible?", Bible Odyssey [2018], accessed 2 July 2019 from https://www.bibleodyssey.org:443/en/tools/bible-basics/what-are-the-earliest-versions-and-translations-of-the-bible.).

source of guidance for life in strange places among strangers. Every word, every letter of the Torah, was studied by the rabbis to extract guidance from and derive regulations for daily life that fenced the Jews off from their social surroundings. There was a tendency to tie the Word of God strongly to the Hebrew language of the Scrolls, with the specialist rabbis studying and explaining the Hebrew words, letters and phrases. The particularistic idea of Hebrew as a holy tongue, already present in the 2nd century before Christ, for example in the Book of Jubilees, was reinforced in rabbinic Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem[2] but universalist views of Hebrew as one language among others, all equally fit to contain and express the Word of God, also survived in rabbinic Judaism, never a monolithic block[3].

But we should not project the second and third century world of rabbinic Judaism on the pluriform Judaism in the centuries before the fall of Jerusalem. The writers of the Greek New Testament were Hellenistic Jews for who the Word of God was not bound to the Hebrew language. The vast majority of quotations and allusions to the writings of the Old Testament in the New Testament are from the Old Greek translations. These Greek Scriptures are quoted as Holy Writ that speaks with authority. The Jewish Christians were not exceptional in this regard. Other Jewish groups and communities had come to accept Greek form of the OT writings as Holy Scripture.

The earliest Christian communities centered on the veneration of Jesus Christ, the "Word made flesh". They did prefer Greek Holy Scriptures written on codices over the Hebrew scrolls. "The holiness resided not in the written text or the language in which it was written but in the Christological reality to which it witnessed".[4] These Christian communities continued translational practices of their Jewish ancestors.[5] The first translations of Holy Scripture appear as early as the Babylonian Exile in the 6th century before Christ.[6] Most Jewish folks living

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2) Theo A. W. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies* (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 51.
3) Ibid., 52-54.
4) David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 279.
5) Brennan Breed, "What Are the Earliest Versions and Translations of the Bible?".
6) Ibid.

in Babylonian exile spoke only or mostly Aramaic, the lingua franca or common language of the empire, and it became necessary for the rabbis in the synagogues to have someone orally render the readings from the Hebrew scrolls into Aramaic. These oral interpretations and explanations, spoken paraphrases called *targumim*, eventually became written down in the first and second centuries after Christ. But these Aramaic translations of Holy Scriptures functioned in rabbinic contexts and the rabbis as a rule did not accept the Aramaic translations as having authority, let alone as replacements of the Hebrew Scrolls in the liturgy.[7] However, as generations after generations used the Aramaic translations, in some times and places the Aramaic versions received more and more authority and became accepted in the synagogue liturgy as the Word of God. This liturgical role of the Aramaic versions has survived until today in the synagogues of Yemenite Jews on the Arab peninsula.[8]

The Old Greek versions quoted in the New Testament with authority as the Word of God also had ancient roots in Jewish Diaspora life. Ever since the third century before Christ when the Greek empire of Alexander the Great had turned Greek into the major lingua franca, Jewish communities all over the ancient world had begun to translate Hebrew scrolls into Greek, starting in Egypt with the Torah. For many Jewish communities and groups in the days of the writers of the New Testament, not for all to be sure, these Old Greek Holy Scriptures had acquired a lot of authority, leading people to accepting that God could also speak to His people through Greek Scriptures, loosening the ties between the Word of God and a specific language or language form. A well-known advocate of the authority of Old Greek Scriptures is the Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria in the first century. He writes about the translators of the Greek Scriptures that they "as if inspired by God, became like prophets, not everyone with different words, but everyone with the same words and the same turns, as if an invisible prompter had dictated them".[9]

The earliest Christian communities accepted the Old Greek versions as the

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7) Ibid.
8) Ibid.
9) Philo in De Vita Mosis II, 37, quoted in Theo A. W. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies.*

Word of God, just as many other Jewish groups had done. Only after the fall of Jerusalem in the first centuries when rabbinic Judaism emerged as the dominant factor in Jewish life and when the split between Synagogue and Church was definitive and sharp, rabbinic Jews returned to the Hebrew Scrolls of a specific textual tradition that would become the Masoretic text in mediaeval times.[10]

Meanwhile, the Christians embraced the Old Greek versions, edited, expanded and revised them, on top of the additions of earlier Hellenistic Jewish editors and translators.[11] Crucially, early Christians embraced their collection of Old Greek versions as their liturgical text, and combined them with early Christian Greek writings by the apostles and others into the Greek Bible known as the Septuagint. With their increased focus on the Hebrew Scrolls, rabbinic Jewish communities started to perceive the Septuagint as a Christian text, a corruption of the Holy Hebrew Scrolls. It was this Septuagint, the Greek Christian Bible, that was translated into Latin (2nd and 3rd century), Coptic (3rd century), Armenian (5th century) and Arabic (9th century).[12] The Eastern Orthodox Churches use the Septuagint to this day as their Bible.

The inescapable conclusion is that Christianity from its inception continued the rich translational traditions of their Jewish ancestors. Before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD early Christians shared with some other Hellenistic Jewish communities the universalist belief that God was not bound or tied to a specific holy language in his communication with humankind. After the fall of Jerusalem particularistic rabbinic views became dominant in the centuries that followed in many synagogues of the diaspora, binding the holy Hebrew language and God's revelation tightly together.

This does not mean that more universalistic theologies of Scripture were not found in rabbinic Judaism; it was never a monolithic block.[13] But Christianity from its very beginning allowed translated Scriptures to function in the liturgy to speak with authority as Holy Writ. The Greek translation was no longer a

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10) Brennan Breed, "What Are the Earliest Versions and Translations of the Bible?".

11) Ibid.

12) See Philip A. Noss, ed., *A History of Bible Translation* (Rome: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 2007) for Latin, Coptic, Armenian and Arabic versions.

13) Theo A. W. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies,* 25-55.

servant of the Holy Text, as a parallel explanatory text, but its skopos broadened to become not only a Holy Text in liturgy but also as the basis and judge of theological disputes.

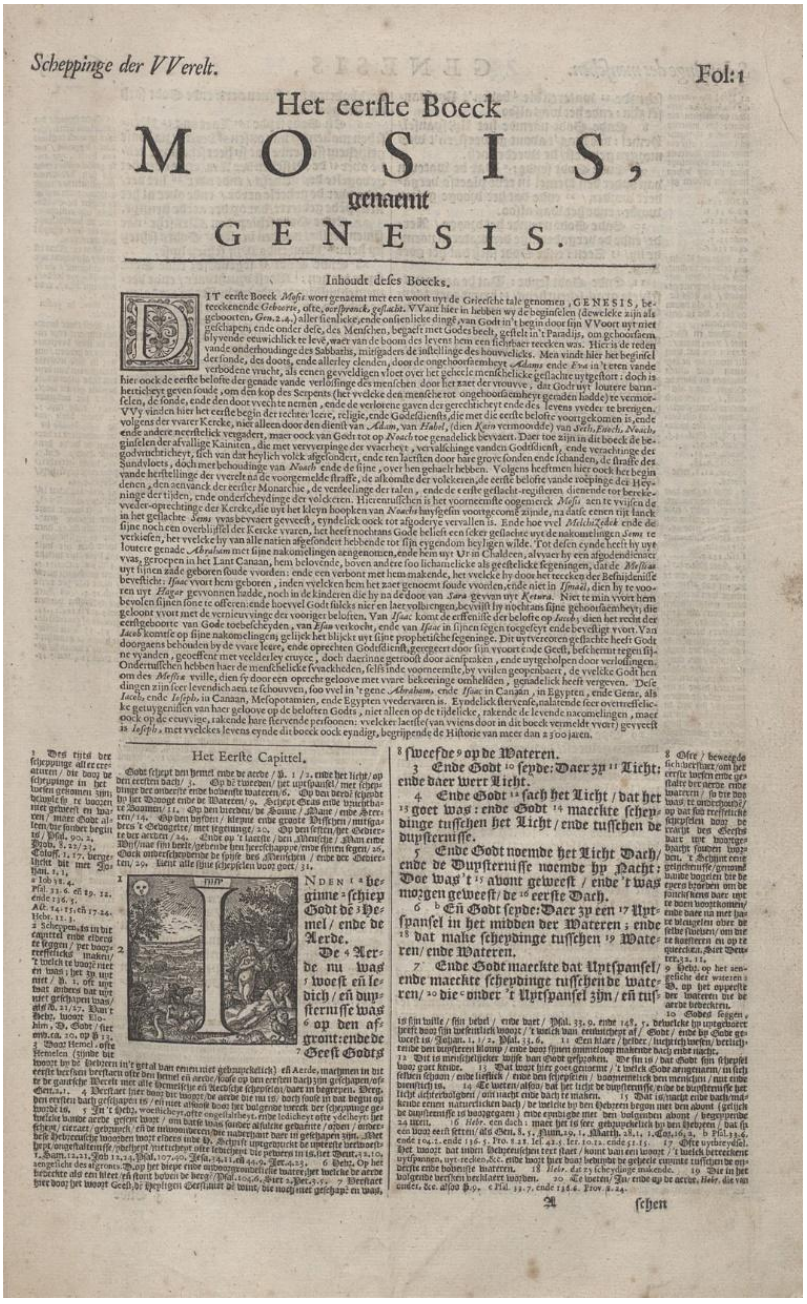
The same can be said of Jerome's Latin Vulgate or the English King James Bible: they became the Word of God for their faith communities. Christianity in this sense is more radically a translational religion than Judaism and Islam. The Greek Septuagint, and soon its Old Latin translation, became so much the Word of God that the Hebrew Bible was pushed towards the periphery, almost forgotten by many Christians. So much so, that when St Jerome in the 4th century wanted a new Latin translation of the Old Testament translated from the Hebrew, the church had a hard time to accept that new Latin version that we now know as the Vulgate.[14)]

3. Contemporary perspectives: why are there so many translations for us to choose from?

Bible translations have expiry dates just like food items on the shelves of our supermarkets. This is because languages change all the time, spelling systems change, insights in the biblical languages and exegesis change, but also the base texts that are used for Bible translation change, as do the things that people want to do with their Bibles in church, in daily life and in society. Divisions and splits in the church, for example in the time of the Reformation, also created the need for retranslation. Take for example the Dutch Authorized Version from the 17th century (see fig. 1). For Dutch Protestants it was very important that lay people could read and understand the Bible themselves, so it was not only necessary to retranslate the Bible into Dutch but also to add helps for reading and understanding for people without a theological education at seminaries. Therefore they added many layers of metatext such as introductions, marginal notes, illustrations, pericope titles and so on:

14) Brennan Breed, "What Are the Earliest Versions and Translations of the Bible?".

Figure 1. Genesis 1 in Dutch Authorized Version of 1637


Scheppinge der VVerelt. Fol:1

Het eerſte Boeck
MOSIS,
genaemt
GENESIS.

Inhoudt deſes Boecks.

IT eerſte Boeck *Moſis* wort genaemt met een woort uyt de Grieeſche tale genomen, GENESIS, beteeckenende *Geboorte*, ofte, *oorſprunck, afcomſt*. VVant hier in hebben wy de beginſelen (deweleke zijn als geboorten, *Gen.* 2. 4.) aller ſienlicke, ende onſienlicke dinge, van Godt in't begin door ſijn VVoort uyt niet geſchapen; ende onder deſe, des Menſchen, begaeft met Godes beelt, geſtelt in't Paradijs, om gehoorſaem, bly vrolijck en ſaligh te leve, waer van de boom des leyens hem een ſichtbaer teecken was. Hier is de reden vande onderhoudinge des Sabbaths, mitsgaders de inſtellinge des houwelicks. Men vindt hier het beginſel der ſonde, des doots, ende allerley elenden, door de ongehoorſaemheyt *Adams* ende *Eve* in't eeten vande verbodene vrucht, als eenen gevveldigen vloet over het geheele menſchelicke geſlachte uytgeſtort: doch is hier oock de eerſte belofte der genade vande verloſſinge des menſchen door het zaet der vrouvve, dat Godt uyt louttere barmhertigheyt geven ſoude, om den kop des Serpents (het vvelcke den menſche tot ongehoorſaemheyt verleyt hadde) te vermorſelen, de ſonde, ende den doot vvech te nemen, ende de verlorene gaven der gerechtigheyt ende des leyens vvederom te bevvegen. VVy vinden hier het eerſte begin der rechter leere, religie, ende Godesdienſts, die met die eerſte belofte voort gekomen is, ende volgens der vvarer Kercke, niet alleen door den dienſt van *Adam*, van *Habel*, (dien *Kain* vermoordde) van *Seth*, *Enoch*, *Noach*, ende andere neerſtelick vergadert, maer oock van Godt tot op *Noach* toe genadelick bevvaert. Daer toe zijn in dit boeck de beginſelen der afvallige Kaineten, die met vervverpinge der vvaerheyt, vervalſchinge vanden Godtſdienſt, ende verachtinge des Sandtvloets, doch met behoudinge van *Noach* ende de ſijne, over hen gehaelt hebben. Volgens heeftmen hier oock het begin vande herſtellinge der vvereldt na de voorgemelde ſtraffe, die alkomdte der volckeren, die eerſte belofte vande voeginge der Heydenen, den eenvanck der eerſter Monarchie, de verdeelinge der talen, ende de eerſte geſlacht-regiſteren dienende tot bereckeninge der tijden, ende onderſcheydinge der volckeren. Hierenuſſchen is het voornemſte oogemerck *Moſis* aen te vviſen de vvelcke opvvechinge der Kercke, die uyt het kleyn hoopken van *Noachs* huyſgeſin voortgecomen zijnde, na datſe eenen tijt lanck in het geſlachte *Sems* van bevvaert geveeſt, eyndelick oock tot afgoderye vervallen is. Ende hoe vvel *Melchizedek* ende de ſijne noch een overblijſſel der Kercke vvaren, het heeft nochtans Gode believt een ſecker geſlachte uyt de naekomelingen *Sems* te verkiefen, het vvelcke hy van alle natien afgeſondert hebbende tot ſijn eygendom heyligen wilde. Tot deſen eynde heeft hy uyt louttere genade *Abrahum* met ſijne nakomelingen aengenomen, ende hem uyt Ur in Chaldeen, alvvaer hy een afgodendienaer vvas, geroepen in het Lant Canaan, hem belovende, boven andere ſoo lichamelicke als geeſtelicke ſegeninge, dat de *Meſſias* uyt ſijnen zade geboren ſoude vvorden: ende een verbont met hem makende, het vvelcke hy doos heer teecken der Beſnijdenifſe bevveſtiche: *Iſaac* vvort hem geboren, inden vvelcken hem het zaet genoemt ſoude vvorden, ende niet in *Ismaël*, dien hy te vooren uyt *Hagar* gevvonnen hadde, noch in de kinderen die hy na de doot van *Sara* gevvan uyt *Ketura*. Niet te min vvort hem bevolen ſijnen ſone te offeren: ende hoevvel Godt ſulcks niet en liet vervullen, bevvijſt hy nochtans ſijne gehoorſaemheyt; die geloont vvort met de vernieuvvinge des vvoriges beloftens. Van *Iſaac* komt de eerſtenifſe der belofte op *Jacob*; dien het recht der eerſtgeboorte van Godt toebeſcheyden, van *Eſau* verkocht, ende van *Iſaac* in ſijnen ſegen toegeſeyt ende bevveſtigt vvort. Van *Jacob* komtſe op ſijne nakomelingen, gelijck het blijckt uyt ſijne prophetiſche ſegeninge. Dit uytvercoren geſlachte heeft Godt doorgaens behouden by de vvare leere, ende oprechten Godtſdienſt, geregeert door ſijn vvoort ende Geeſt, beſchermt tegen ſijne vyanden, geoeffent met veelderley ellenden, doch dieſelve getrooſt door aenſpraken, ende uytgeholpen door verlo[illegible]ingen. Ondertuſſchen hebben haer de menſchelicke fvvackheden, ſelfs inde voornemſte, by vvijlen geopenbaert, de vvelcke Godt hen om des *Meſſias* vville, dien ſy door een oprecht geloove met vvare bekeeninge omhelden, gedadelick heeft vergeven. Deſe dingen zijn leer levendich aen te ſchouvven, ſoo vvel in't gene *Abraham*, ende *Iſaac* in Canaan, in Egypten, ende Gerar, als *Iacob*, ende *Joſeph*, in Canaan, Meſopotamien, ende Egypten vvedervaren is. Eyndelick hervveſe, nalatende ſeer overtreffelicke getuygeniſſen van haer geloove op de beloften Godts, niet alleen op de tijdelicke, rakende de levende na canadelingen, maer oock op de eeuvvige, rakende haer ſtervende perſoonen: vvelcker laetſte (an vviens door in dit boeck vermeldt vvort) gevveeſt is *Joſeph*, met vvelckes levens eynde dit boeck oock eyndigt, begrijpende de Hiſtorie van meer dan 2300 jaren.

Het Eerſte Capittel.

1 Godt ſchept den hemel ende de aerde / 8. 11, ende het licht / op den eerſten dach / 3. Op de tweeden / het uytſpanſel / met ſcheydinge der onderſte ende bovenſte vvateren, 6. Op den derde / ſchepſel op het VVoogt ende de Vvateren / 9. Beſchept Godt ende vruchtbare Boomen / 11. Op den vierden / de Sonne / Maen / ende Sterren / 14. Op den vijfden / diergte ende groote Vviſchen / mitsgaders 't Gevogelte / met zijnen zegen / 20. Op den ſeſten / het Gedierte der aerden / 24. Ende op 't laeſte / den Menſche / Adam ende Heven bevvaſſinge ſijns beelts / gebruike hun heerſchappije / ende ſijnen zegen / 26. Godt onderſcheydt van de ſpijſe des Menſchen / ende der Gedieren, 29. Kiest alle ſijne ſcheppſelen vvoort goet, 31.

1 NDEN 1 beginne ſchiey Godt de Hemel / ende de Aerde.

2 De 2 Aerde nu was woeſt en ledich / en duyſternis was op den afgront: ende de 3 Geeſt Godts

8 ſweefde 9 op de Vvateren.

3 Ende Godt 10 ſeyde: Daer zy 11 Licht: ende daer werd Licht.

4 Ende Godt 12 ſach het Licht / dat het 13 goet was: ende Godt 14 maeckte ſcheydinge tuſſchen het Licht / ende tuſſchen de duyſternisſe.

5 Ende Godt noemde het Licht Dach / ende de Duyſternisſe noemde hy Nacht: Doe was't 15 avont geweeſt / ende 't was morgen geweeſt / de 16 eerſte Dach.

6 b En Godt ſeyde: Daer zy een 17 Uytſpanſel in het midden der Vvateren; ende 18 dat make ſcheydinge tuſſchen 19 Vvateren / ende Vvateren.

7 Ende Godt maeckte dat Uytſpanſel / ende maeckte ſcheydinge tuſſchen de vvateren / 20 die 21 onder 't Uytſpanſel zijn / en tuſſchen de vvateren die 22 boven 't Uytſpanſel zijn: en 23 alſo geſchiede.

8 Ende Godt noemde het Uytſpanſel Hemel. Ende 24 de Avont vvas / ende de Morgen vvas / de tvveede dach.

9 Godt ſeyde voorts: Laet vergadert zijn de vvateren / die onder den Hemel zijn / in een plaetſe / ende laet droochte geſien: en alſo geſchiede.

10 Ende Godt noemde de droochte Aerde / ende de vergadinge der vvateren noemde hy Zeen: ende Godt ſach dat het goet was.

11 Ende Godt ſeyde: Laet de Aerde uytſpruyten gruyne / ende 25 zaet-draegende cruyden / ende 26 vruchtbare Boomen / die vruchten draegen / na haer aert / vvelcker zaet in haer ſelfs is / op de Aerde: en alſo geſchiede.

12 Ende de Aerde bracht voort gruyne / ende 27 zaet-draegende cruyden / na haer aert / ende boomen die vruchten draegen / vvelcker zaet in haer ſelfs is / na haer aert: ende Godt ſach dat het goet was.

13 Ende de Avont vvas / ende de Morgen vvas / de derde dach.

14 Ende Godt ſeyde: Laet lichten zijn in het Uytſpanſel des Hemels / om te ſcheyden tuſſchen de Dach / ende tuſſchen de Nacht: ende laet ſe zijn tot teekenen / ende tot 28 tijden / ende tot dagen / ende jaren.

15 Ende laet ſe zijn tot lichten in het Uytſpanſel des Hemels / om te verlichten op de Aerde: en alſo geſchiede.

16 Ende Godt maeckte twee groote lichten: het groote licht tot 29 heerſchappije des dachs / ende het cleyne licht tot heerſchappije der nachten / ende de ſterren.

17 Ende Godt ſtelde ſe in het Uytſpanſel des Hemels / om te verlichten op de Aerde.

18 Ende om te heerſchen in den dach / ende in de nacht / ende om te ſcheyden tuſſchen het licht / ende tuſſchen de duyſternisſe: ende Godt ſach dat het goet was.

19 Ende de Avont vvas / ende de Morgen vvas / de vierde dach.

20 Ende Godt ſeyde: Laet de vvateren voortbrengen 30 kruypende ſielen / die leven: ende laet vogelen vliegen op de Aerde / in het openbaer des Hemels.

21 Ende Godt ſchiep groote 31 Vviſchen / ende alle kruypende ſielen / die leven / die de vvateren voortbrachten / na haer aert: ende alle gevogelte / na haer aert: ende Godt ſach dat het goet was.

22 Ende Godt ſegende ſe / ſeggende: Vvaſſet / ende vermenichvuldicht / ende vervvt de vvateren in de zeen: ende laet de vogelen vermenichvuldichen op de Aerde.

23 Ende de Avont vvas / ende de Morgen vvas / de vijfde dach.

24 Ende Godt ſeyde: Laet de Aerde voortbrengen ziele / na haer aert / 32 vee / ende kruypende dieren / ende 33 beeſten der Aerden / na haer aert: en alſo geſchiede.

25 Ende Godt maeckte de beeſten der Aerden / na haer aert / ende 34 vee / na haer aert / ende alle kruypende dieren der Aerden / na haer aert: ende Godt ſach dat het goet was.

26 Ende Godt ſeyde: Laet ons 35 menſchen maken / na ons beelt / ende na ons gelijckenisſe: ende laet ſe heerſchen over de vviſchen der zeen / ende over de vogelen des Hemels / ende over de beeſten / ende over de gantſche Aerde / ende over alle kruypende dieren die op de Aerde kruypen.

27 Ende Godt ſchiep den menſche na ſijn beelt / na het beelt Godts ſchiep hy hem: man ende vvijf ſchiep hy ſe.

28 Ende Godt ſegende ſe / ende Godt ſeyde tot ſe: Vvaſſet / ende vermenichvuldicht / ende vervvt de Aerde / ende maeckt ſe ondergedaen: ende heerſchet over de vviſchen der zeen / ende over de vogelen des Hemels / ende over alle beeſten die op de Aerde kruypen.

29 Ende Godt ſeyde: Siet / ick hebbe u gegeven alle cruyden draegende zaet / die op de gantſche Aerde zijn / ende alle boomen draegende vruchten / die zaet draegen: u ſal ſe tot ſpijſe zijn.

30 Ende alle beeſten der Aerden / ende alle vogelen des Hemels / ende alle kruypende dieren op de Aerde / die leven / hebbe ick alle groene cruyden tot ſpijſe gegeven: en alſo geſchiede.

31 Ende Godt ſach alle ſijne ſcheppſelen / die hy gemaeckt hadde / ende ſiet / ſe waren ſeer goet: ende de Avont vvas / ende de Morgen vvas / de ſeſte dach.

2 1 Alſo 2 vvierden de Hemel / ende de Aerde / ende al 3 het heer haers / voleyndet.

2 Ende Godt voleyndede op den ſeſten dach ſijne vverck / die hy gemaeckt hadde: ende hy 4 rustede op den ſeven dach van alle ſijne vverck / die hy gemaeckt hadde.

3 Ende Godt 5 ſegende den ſeven dach / ende heyligde hem: want in hem 6 rustede hy van alle ſijne vverck / die Godt ſchiep ende maeckte.

4 Dit zijn de 7 geſlachten des Hemels / ende der Aerde / doe ſe geſchapen vvaren / ten tijde als de HERE Godt Aerde ende Hemel maeckte.

5 Ende alle 8 gevvas des velts / eer het op der Aerde vvies: ende alle 9 cruyt des velts / eer het opvvies: want de HERE Godt hadde niet doen regenen op de Aerde / ende daer vvas geen menſche / die den 10 acker bouvde.

6 Maer 11 een damp ginck op van der Aerden / ende 12 befeuchtede alle de oppervlacke des ackers.

7 Ende de HERE Godt 13 formeerde den menſche / ſtof van der Aerden / ende blies in ſijne neuſe 14 den adem des levens: ende alſo vvort de menſche tot een 15 levende ziele.

8 Ende de HERE Godt 16 plantede een hof in Eden / tegen 17 Oſten: ende ſchiep daer in den menſche / dien hy gemaeckt hadde.

9 Ende de HERE Godt 18 deede uyt der Aerden alle boomen 19 luſtich te ſien / ende goet te eeten: ende den 20 boom des leyens midden in den hof / ende den 21 boom der kennisſe des goets ende des quaets.

10 Ende een 22 ſtroom ginck uyt van Eden / den hof te 23 vvateren: ende van daer vvas hy verdeelt / ende vvort tot vier 24 hoofden.

11 De naem des eerſten is Pison: dat is het / dat 25 omringt het gantſche land Havila / daer het goude is.

12 Ende het goude van dat ſelve lant is 26 goet: daer is 27 Bedolach / ende de 28 Onyx-ſteen.

13 Ende de naem des tvveeden ſtroom is Gihon: dat is het / dat 29 omringt het gantſche land Cus.

14 Ende de naem des derden ſtroom is Hiddekel: dat is het / dat 30 voor Aſſur ginck. Ende de vierde ſtroom is Phrat.

15 Ende de HERE Godt nam den menſche / ende ſette hem in den hof Eden / dien te 31 bevverken / ende te 32 bevvaren.

16 Ende de HERE Godt 33 gebood den menſche / ſeggende: Van alle boomen des hofs ſult gy 34 eeten:

17 Maer van den boom der kennisſe des goets ende des quaets / daer ſult gy niet van eeten: want ten dage als gy daer van eeten / ſult gy ſeecker ſterven.

18 Ende de HERE Godt ſeyde: Het is niet goet dat de menſche alleen ſy: ick ſal hem een 35 hulpe maken / die hem gelijck ſy.

19 Ende de HERE Godt 36 formeerde uyt der Aerden alle beeſten des velts / ende alle vogelen des Hemels: ende 37 brachtſe tot den menſche / om te ſien / vvat hy ſe noemen ſoude: ende alſo vvanneer de menſche alle levende ziele noemde / ſoo vvas haer naem.

20 Ende de menſche 38 noemde alle beeſten / ende vogelen des Hemels / ende alle beeſten des velts: maer voor den menſche vvas geen hulpe gevonden die hem gelijck vvas.

21 Ende de HERE Godt 39 dede een ſvvaere ſlaep vallen op den menſche / ende hy ſliep: ende hy nam een van ſijne 40 ribben / ende 41 ſloot de plaetſe met vleeſch in haer ſtede.

22 Ende de HERE Godt 42 bouvde de ribbe / die hy nam van den menſche / tot een vvijf / ende 43 brachtſe tot den menſche.

23 Ende de menſche ſeyde: Dit is nu 44 been van mijne beenen / ende vleeſch van mijn vleeſch: deſe ſal 45 Vvijf genaemt vvorden / dvvijle ſe van den Man genomen is.

24 Hier om ſal een man 46 verlaten ſijnen vader / ende ſijne moeder / ende ſal hem houden aen ſijne vvijf / ende ſy ſullen tot een vleeſch zijn.

25 Ende ſy vvaren beyde naeckt / de menſche ende ſijne vvijf / ende ſy 47 ſchaemden ſich niet.

3 1 Ende de ſlange vvas 2 ſubtijl boven alle beeſten des velts / die de HERE Godt gemaeckt hadde: ende ſy ſeyde tot de vvijf: Hoe / heeft Godt vvarachtich geſeyt / gy ſult van alle boomen des hofs niet eeten?

2 Ende de vvijf ſeyde tot de ſlange: Van de vruchten der boomen des hofs ſullen vvy eeten:

3 Maer van de vruchten der boomen die midden in den hof ſtaen / heeft Godt geſeyt / gy ſult daer van niet eeten / ende gy ſult het niet 3 roeren / op dat gy niet ſterven.

4 Ende de ſlange ſeyde tot de vvijf: Gy ſult ſeecker niet ſterven:

5 Maer Godt 4 weet / dat ten dage als gy daer van eeten / ſoo ſullen uvve oogen 5 geopent vvorden / ende gy ſult als Godt zijn / 6 kennende goet ende quaet.

6 Ende de vvijf ſach dat de boom goet vvas tot eeten / ende dat hy 7 lieflick vvas den oogen / ende dat de boom 8 begeerlick vvas om verſtandich te maken: ende ſy nam van ſijne vruchten / ende at: ende ſy gaf oock haren man met haer / ende hy at.

7 Ende de oogen beyder vverden geopent / ende ſy vvaren vvarachtich 9 vvaer dat ſy naeckt vvaren: ende ſy 10 vvonden vyghe-boomen bladeren / ende maeckten ſich 11 ſchorten.

8 Ende ſy hoorden de ſtemme des HEREN Godts / die in den hof 12 vvandelde ter tijden des middachs vvinde: ende de menſche / ende ſijne vvijf / verſtaken ſich voor het aengeſicht des HEREN Godts / onder de boomen des hofs.

9 Ende de HERE Godt 13 riep den menſche / ende ſeyde tot hem: Vvaer bent gy?

10 Ende hy ſeyde: Ick hebbe uvve ſtemme gehoort in den hof / ende ick 14 vreesde / dvvijle ick naeckt ben / ende ick verſtack my.

11 Ende hy ſeyde: Vvie heeft u 15 aengevvesen / dat gy naeckt ſijt? Hebdy niet van den boom gegeten / van den vvelcken ick u gebodt hadde / dat gy daer van niet eeten ſoudt?

12 Ende de menſche ſeyde: De vvijf die gy my toegeſeyt hebt / die heeft my van den boom gegeven / ende ick hebbe gegeten.

13 Ende de HERE Godt ſeyde tot de vvijf: Vvaerom hebdy dat gedaen? Ende de vvijf ſeyde: De ſlange heeft my 16 verleyt / ende ick hebbe gegeten.

14 Ende de HERE Godt ſeyde tot de ſlange: Dvvijle dy dat gedaen hebt / ſoo ſy vervloeckt boven alle beeſten / ende boven alle dieren des velts: op dynen buyck ſalſtu gaen / ende aerde ſalſtu eeten alle de dagen dynes levens.

15 Ende ick ſal vyantſchap ſetten tuſſchen dy ende de vvijf / ende tuſſchen dynen zaet ende haren zaet: dat ſelve ſal dynen kop vermorſelen / ende gy ſult hem de 17 verſe vermorſelen.

16 Ende tot de vvijf ſeyde hy: Ick ſal dynen 18 druck ſeer vermenichvuldichen / ende dynen 19 ſvvangerſchap: met druck ſult gy kinderen baren / ende dyn 20 begeerte ſal onder den man ſijn / ende hy ſal over dy heerſchen.

17 Ende tot Adam ſeyde hy: Dvvijle gy naer de ſtemme dyner vvijf gehoort hebt / ende gy gegeten hebt van den boom / van den vvelcken ick u gebodt hadde / ſeggende: Gy ſult daer van niet eeten / ſoo ſy vervloeckt de aerde om dyner vvillen / met 21 druck ſult gy daer van eeten alle de dagen dynes levens.

18 Doornen ende diſtelen ſal ſy u voortbrengen / ende gy ſult het cruyt des velts eeten.

19 In 22 het ſvveet dyns aenſichts ſult gy dyn brood eeten / tot dat gy vvederkeert tot de aerde / daer gy van genomen ſijt: dvvijle gy ſtof ſijt / ende ſult tot ſtof vvederkeren.

20 Ende de menſche noemde ſijne vvijf Heva / om dat ſy de moeder vvas alder levende.

21 Ende de HERE Godt maeckte Adam ende ſijne vvijf 23 rocken van vellen / ende bekleedde ſe.

22 Ende de HERE Godt ſeyde: Siet / de menſche is geworden als een van ons / om te vveten goet ende quaet: ende nu / op dat hy niet 24 ſtrecke ſijne hant uyt / ende neme ook van den boom des leyens / ende eete / ende leve in der eeuvvicheyt:

23 Soo ſtiet hem de HERE Godt uyt den hof Eden / om te 25 bevverken den aerdtrijck / van vvelcken hy genomen vvas.

24 Ende hy dreef den menſche uyt / ende ſtelde voor den hof Eden 26 Cherubim / ende een 27 vlammende ſvvaert / die ſich keerde heen ende vveder / om te bevvaren den vveg des boms des leyens.

4 1 Ende Adam 2 bekende Heva ſijne vvijf / ende ſy vvert ſvvanger / ende baerde Cain / ende ſeyde: Ick hebbe een man 3 verkregen van den HEERE.

2 Ende ſy voegde noch te baren ſijnen broeder Abel. Ende Abel vvert een 4 herder der ſchapen / maer Cain vvert een 5 landtman.

3 Ende het geſchiede na verloop van dagen / dat Cain van de vruchten des velts den HEERE offerde 6 offerande.

4 Ende Abel offerde oock van de 7 eerſtelingen ſijner ſchapen / ende van haer vetſte. Ende de HERE 8 ſach op Abel / ende op ſijne offerande:

5 Maer op Cain / ende op ſijne offerande ſach hy niet. Ende Cain 9 vvert ſeer verbolgen / ende ſijn aenſicht 10 viel.

6 Ende de HERE ſeyde tot Cain: Vvaerom bendy verbolgen? ende vvaerom 11 viel dyn aenſicht?

7 Soo gy vvel doet / ſoo ſalſtu 12 opgenomen vvorden: ende ſoo gy niet vvel doet / ſoo leyt de ſonde voor de deure / ende haer 13 begeerte ſal onder dy ſijn / ende gy ſult over haer heerſchen.

8 Ende Cain ſeyde tot Abel ſijnen broeder: Laet ons 14 uyt gaen. Ende het geſchiede / doe ſe op het veldt vvaren / dat Cain opſtont tegen Abel ſijnen broeder / ende ſloegh hem doot.

9 Ende de HERE ſeyde tot Cain: Vvaer is Abel ſijnen broeder? Ende hy ſeyde: Ick 15 vveet niet: ben ick ſijns broeders hoeder?

10 Ende hy ſeyde: Vvat hebdy gedaen? de ſtemme des bloets ſijns broeders 16 roept tot my van der aerden.

11 Ende nu ſo ſalſtu vervloeckt zijn van der aerden / die haer mondt opgedaen heeft / om het bloet ſijns broeders van dyne handen te 17 ontfangen.

12 Soo gy de aerde 18 bouvt / ſal ſy u voortaen haer 19 cracht niet geven: een 20 vervvorpene ende een 21 vervvijlde ſalſtu op der aerden zijn.

13 Ende Cain ſeyde tot de HERE: Mijne 22 ſtraffe is 23 grooter dan dat ſe gedragen ſoude vvorden.

14 Siet / gy hebt my heden verdreven van den aerdtrijck / ende ick ſal my voor uvven aenſicht 24 verſtecken / ende ick ſal een vervvorpene ende een vervvijlde op der aerden zijn: ende het ſal geſchieden / dat elck die my vindt / my ſal doodſlaen.

15 Ende de HERE ſeyde tot hem: Daerom / elck die Cain doodſlaet / ſal ſevenvoudich 25 gevvroken vvorden. Ende de HERE ſtelde een 26 teecken aen Cain / op dat hem niemant vvonde die hem vonde.

16 Ende Cain ging uyt van het aengeſicht des HEREN / ende 27 vvoonde in het landt Nod / ten oſten van Eden.

17 Ende Cain 28 bekende ſijne vvijf / ende ſy vvert ſvvanger / ende baerde Henoch: ende hy 29 vvaſſende een ſtadt / ende noemde de naem der ſtadt naer den naem ſijns ſoons Henoch.

18 Ende Henoch 30 vvert Irad gevvonnen: ende Irad 31 vvon Mehujael: ende Mehujael 32 vvon Methuſael: ende Methuſael 33 vvon Lamech.

19 Ende Lamech 34 nam hem tvvee vvijven: de naem der eerſter vvas Ada / ende de naem der tvveeder vvas Zilla.

20 Ende Ada 35 vvon Jabal: dat is de vader der 36 gene die in tenten 37 vvoonen / ende 38 vee houden.

21 Ende de naem ſijns broeders vvas Jubal: dat is de vader der 39 gene die 40 harpe ende 41 orgel 42 handelen.

22 Ende Zilla / ſy 43 vvon oock Thubalcain / een 44 ſmit / die alle 45 vverck van koper ende yſer 46 handelde: ende de ſuſter Thubalcains vvas Naema.

23 Ende Lamech ſeyde tot ſijne vvijven Ada ende Zilla: Gy vvijven Lamechs / hoort mijne ſtemme / gy 47 vvijven / neemt mijn 48 vvoort te oren: dvvijle ick een man doodgeſlagen hebbe tot mijner 49 vvonde / ende een jongelingh tot mijner 50 ſtraffe.

24 Soo Cain 51 vvert ſevenvoudich gevvroken / ſoo ſal Lamech ſeventich-vverf ſevenvoudich gevvroken vvorden.

25 Ende Adam 52 bekende noch ſijne vvijf / ende ſy 53 baerde een ſoon / ende noemde ſijnen naem Seth: Want / ſeyde ſy / Godt heeft my een ander ſaet 54 geſtelt voor Abel / dvvijle Cain hem doodgeſlagen heeft.

26 Ende Seth 55 vvert oock een ſoon gevvonnen / ende noemde ſijnen naem Enos. Toen 56 begonſtmen te 57 roepen in den naem des HEREN.

5 1 Dit is het 2 boeck der 3 geſlachten Adams. Ten dage als God den menſche ſchiep / maeckte hy hem in de 4 gelijckenisſe Godts.

2 Man ende vvijf ſchiep hy ſe / ende 5 ſegende ſe / ende noemde ſijnen naem Adam / ten dage als ſe geſchapen vvaren.

3 Ende Adam 6 leefde hondert ende dertich jaren / ende 7 vvon een ſoon in ſijne gelijckenisſe / naer ſijn beelt / ende noemde ſijnen naem Seth.

4 Ende de dagen Adams / nae dat hy Seth gevvonnen hadde / vvaren achthondert jaren: ende hy 8 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

5 Ende alle de dagen die Adam geleeft heeft / vvaren negenhondert ende dertich jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

6 Ende Seth leefde vijfhondert ende vijf jaren / ende 9 vvon Enos.

7 Ende Seth leefde nae dat hy Enos gevvonnen hadde / ſeven hondert ende ſeven jaren: ende hy 10 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

8 Ende alle de dagen Seths vvaren twaelfhondert ende twaelf jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

9 Ende Enos leefde negentich jaren / ende 11 vvon Kenan.

10 Ende Enos leefde nae dat hy Kenan gevvonnen hadde / vijfhondert ende vijftien jaren: ende hy 12 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

11 Ende alle de dagen Enos vvaren negenhondert ende vijf jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

12 Ende Kenan leefde ſeventich jaren / ende 13 vvon Mahalaleel.

13 Ende Kenan leefde nae dat hy Mahalaleel gevvonnen hadde / achthondert ende veertich jaren: ende hy 14 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

14 Ende alle de dagen Kenans vvaren negenhondert ende tien jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

15 Ende Mahalaleel leefde vijfenſeventich jaren / ende 15 vvon Jared.

16 Ende Mahalaleel leefde nae dat hy Jared gevvonnen hadde / achthondert ende dertich jaren: ende hy 16 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

17 Ende alle de dagen Mahalaleels vvaren achthondert ende vijfenvijftich jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

18 Ende Jared leefde hondert ende tvvee en ſeventich jaren / ende 17 vvon Henoch.

19 Ende Jared leefde nae dat hy Henoch gevvonnen hadde / achthondert jaren: ende hy 18 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

20 Ende alle de dagen Jareds vvaren negenhondert ende tvvee en ſeventich jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

21 Ende Henoch leefde vijfenſestich jaren / ende 19 vvon Methuſelah.

22 Ende Henoch 20 vvandelde met God / nae dat hy Methuſelah gevvonnen hadde / drijhondert jaren: ende hy 21 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

23 Ende alle de dagen Henochs vvaren drijhondert ende vijfenſestich jaren.

24 Ende Henoch 22 vvandelde met God / ende hy 23 vvas niet meer / dvvijle God hem 24 nam.

25 Ende Methuſelah leefde ſevenentvvintich jaren / ende 25 vvon Lamech.

26 Ende Methuſelah leefde nae dat hy Lamech gevvonnen hadde / tvveehondert ende tvvee en tachtich jaren: ende hy 26 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

27 Ende alle de dagen Methuſelahs vvaren negenhondert ende ſevenentvvintich jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

28 Ende Lamech leefde tvvee en tachtich jaren / ende 27 vvon een ſoon.

29 Ende hy noemde ſijnen naem Noah / ſeggende: Deſe ſal ons trooſten in onſen 28 arbeyt / ende in de 29 moeyten onſer handen / van de aerde die de HERE vervloeckt heeft.

30 Ende Lamech leefde nae dat hy Noah gevvonnen hadde / vijfhondert ende vijf en negentich jaren: ende hy 30 vvon ſoonen ende dochteren.

31 Ende alle de dagen Lamechs vvaren ſeven hondert ende ſeven en ſeventich jaren: ende hy ſtierf.

32 Ende Noah vvas vijfhondert jaren oudt / ende Noah 31 vvon Sem / Cham / ende Japhet.

6 1 Ende het geſchiede / doe de menſchen begonden te 2 vermenichvuldichen op de aerde / ende hun dochteren 3 vvierden geboren:

2 Doe ſagen de ſoonen Godts de dochteren der menſchen / dat ſe 4 ſchoon vvaren: ende ſe namen hun vvijven van alle die ſe verkoren.

3 Ende de HERE ſeyde: Mijn Geeſt ſal niet altijt in den menſche 5 twiſten / dvvijle hy oock vleeſch is: maer ſijne dagen ſullen 6 hondert ende tvvintich jaren zijn.

4 Reuſen 7 vvaren op de aerde in dien tijt / ende oock daer nae / doe de ſoonen Godts tot de dochteren der menſchen 8 quamen / ende ſe hun kinderen baerden: deſelve vvaren 9 machtige die van outs 10 geſlachten vvaren.

5 Ende de HERE ſach dat de 11 quaetheyt des menſchen groot vvas op der aerden / ende dat alle 12 gedachten der gedachten ſijns harten alleenlick quaet vvaren alle dage.

6 Ende de HERE 13 reuvde dat hy den menſche op der aerden gemaeckt hadde / ende 14 bekommerde ſich in ſijn hert.

7 Ende de HERE ſeyde: Ick ſal den menſche die ick geſchapen hebbe / van den aerdtrijck 15 vervvijlen / beyde menſche / beeſt / ende 16 kruypende dier / ende vogelen des Hemels: want het 17 reuvt my dat ick ſe gemaeckt hebbe.

8 Maer Noah 18 vvon 19 genade in de oogen des HEREN.

9 Dit zijn de 20 geſlachten Noahs. Noah vvas een 21 rechtvaerdich man / ende 22 oprecht in ſijne tijden: Noah 23 vvandelde met God.

10 Ende Noah 24 vvon drie ſoonen / Sem / Cham / ende Japhet.

11 Ende de aerde vvas 25 verdorven voor het aengeſicht Godts / ende de aerde vvas vervult met 26 ongerechtigheyt.

12 Ende God ſach de aerde / ende ſiet / ſe vvas verdorven: want alle vleeſch hadde ſijnen 27 vveg verdorven op der aerden.

13 Ende God ſeyde tot Noah: Het 28 einde alles vleeſches is voor mijn aengeſicht gekomen: want de aerde is vervult met 29 ongerechtigheyt van haer wegen: ende ſiet / ick ſal ſe verderven met der aerden.

14 Maeckt u een 30 arke van 31 goffer-houdt: met 32 kamers ſult gy de arke maken / ende ſult ſe van binnen ende van buyten met 33 pek 34 verpijchen.

15 Ende alſo ſult gy ſe maken: dat de lengde der arke drijhondert 35 ellen zy / de breedde der ſelver vijftich ellen / ende de hoochde der ſelver dertich ellen.

16 Een 36 vvindt-gat ſult gy aen de arke maken / ende ſult het voleynden tot een ellen boven: ende de 37 deure der arke ſult gy in haer ſijde ſetten: met onderſte / tvveede / ende derde 38 verdiepinge ſult gy ſe maken.

17 Want ſiet / ick ſal een 39 vvaterflodt over de aerde brengen / om alle vleeſch te verderven / dat den 40 adem des levens heeft onder den Hemel: alles dat op der aerden is / ſal 41 vergaen.

18 Maer met u ſal ick mijn 42 verbondt 43 ſtellen / ende gy ſult in de arke gaen / gy / ende uvve ſoonen / ende uvve vvijf / ende uvve ſoonen vvijven met u.

19 Ende van alle levende / van alle vleeſch / ſult gy tvvee van alle in de arke brengen / op dat ſe met u 44 leven: 45 manneken ende 46 vvijfken ſullen ſe zijn.

20 Van de vogelen na haer aert / ende van de beeſten na haer aert / van alle kruypende dieren des aerdtrijcks na haer aert / tvvee van alle ſullen tot u komen / op dat ſe leven.

21 Ende gy ſult tot u nemen van alle ſpijſe die gegeten vvort / ende ſult ſe by u vergaderen: ende ſy ſullen u ende haer tot ſpijſe zijn.

22 Ende Noah 47 deedt alles / ſoo als God hem gebodt hadde: alſo deedt hy.

7 1 Ende de HERE ſeyde tot Noah: Gae in de arke / gy ende uvve gantſche huys: want ick hebbe u voor my 2 rechtvaerdich geſien in deſe 3 eeuvve.

2 Van alle 4 reyne beeſten ſult gy tot u nemen ſeven ende ſeven / 5 manneken ende 6 vvijfken: ende van de beeſten die niet reyne en zijn / tvvee / 7 manneken ende 8 vvijfken:

3 Ende van de vogelen des Hemels oock ſeven ende ſeven / 9 manneken ende 10 vvijfken / om 11 ſaet te houden op het gantſche aenſicht der aerden.

4 Want noch ſeven dagen / ende ick ſal 12 doen regenen op de aerde veertich dagen ende veertich nachten: ende ick ſal alle 13 ſubſtantie die ick gemaeckt hebbe / 14 vervvijlen van het aengeſicht der aerden.

5 Ende Noah 15 deedt alles / dat hem de HERE gebodt hadde.

6 Ende Noah vvas ſeshondert jaren oudt / doe de 16 vvaterflodt op der aerden vvas.

7 Ende Noah ging in de arke / ende ſijne ſoonen / ende ſijne vvijf / ende ſijne ſoonen vvijven met hem / voor de 17 vvaterflodt.

8 Van de reyne beeſten / ende van de beeſten die niet reyne en zijn / ende van de vogelen / ende van alle dat 18 kruypt op der aerden /

9 Tvvee en tvvee quamen tot Noah in de arke / 19 manneken ende 20 vvijfken / gelijck als God Noah gebodt hadde.

10 Ende het geſchiede na verloop van ſeven dagen / dat de 21 vvaterflodt op der aerden vvas.

11 In het ſeshondertſte jaer des leyens Noahs / in de tvveede maent / op den ſeventienden dach der maent / op dien ſelven dach 22 ſoo vvierden alle 23 fonteynen der groote 24 diepten 25 verbroken / ende de 26 vvindt-gaten des Hemels vverden geopent.

12 Ende de 27 regen vvas op der aerden veertich dagen ende veertich nachten.

13 In het ſelve 28 beſtont ginck Noah in de arke / ende Sem / Cham / ende Japhet / Noahs ſoonen / ende Noahs vvijf / ende de drie ſoonen vvijven met hen in de arke:

14 Sy / ende alle 29 gedierten na haer aert / ende alle beeſten na haer aert / ende alle kruypende dieren die op der aerden kruypen na haer aert / ende alle vogelen na haer aert / alle voghelkens / alle gevleugelde.

15 Ende ſy qu

indeed a key part of the history of Christianity as a translational religion.

Changing technologies of writing, copying, making books are a key factor in the history of the Bible. The change from scrolls to codices, for example, made it possible to have multiple books of the Bible in one volume. Before that, there were just separate scrolls of Holy Writings. The invention of the printing press again changed the history of the Bible and its translation in very dramatic ways. Today we experience another technological change, the digital revolution, with great impact on the translation of the Bible. Paratext 8 and other software makes it possible to check consistency of spelling, or key terms or formatting in a few minutes. And hundreds of corrections can be implemented in seconds. The developments in technology made it much easier and cheaper to revise, correct or retranslate the Bible. Bible translations for special audiences began to appear, such as Bibles in sign language, Bibles for people with limited literacy skills, study Bibles, interlinear Bibles and so on.

But behind all these factors that drove constant retranslation of the Bible in our languages, there is one overarching fundamental factor that is characteristic for Christianity as a translational religion: the deeply felt need for *actualization* of the Word of God, that is to make the Word of God clear, actual and relevant for new generations in new circumstances. The actualization motive was already behind the Aramaic and Greek translations of Hebrew Scripture in the centuries before Christ. H. Sysling[16] in his study of translation techniques in Old Greek and Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Scriptures concludes "that they all try to *actualize* Scripture, interpreting it and applying it to their own historical and religious situation and time", for example the Aramaic Targum Neofiti on Genesis 10:10 replaces the geographical names with contemporary ones that the new audience could relate to: "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Edessa, Nisibis, and Ctesiphon in the land of Babel" rather than "Babel, Erech and Accad, all of them in the land of Sinear" as in Hebrew Scripture.[17] But where these Aramaic and Greek actualizing versions in many places did not take over the liturgical role of the Hebrew Scriptures as sacred text with authority, early Christianity accepted the actualising translations as the Word of God, as

16) H. Sysling, "Translation techniques in the Ancient Bible translations: Septuagint and Targum", Philip A. Noss, ed., *A History of Bible Translation* (Rome: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 2007), 278.

17) Ibid., 303.

testifying to the Christ, worthy to be the only form of Scripture used in their gatherings and liturgy. This actualization factor is the topic of the next section.

4. Bible Translation as liturgical incarnation of the Logos: a theological perspective of actualization

As we saw, the earliest Christian communities centered on the veneration of Jesus Christ, the "Word made flesh". They read the sacred writings of what we now call the Hebrew Bible in Greek and for them these ancient Greek Scriptures were filled with Christ, as Christ Himself and His apostles had taught them when they applied the writings of the Psalms, Isaiah and other books to the mission, life and death of Christ. Christ had fulfilled the books of the Law and the Prophets. The earliest Christians, predominantly Jewish, preferred the ancient Greek version of the Psalms, Isaiah and the other sacred scriptures. For them "The holiness resided not in the written text or the language in which it was written but in the Christological reality to which it witnessed".[18] From their perspective the Word of God, the Logos, was a universal gift to all humans, and not at all tied to the linguistic and cultural horizons of special holy languages.

Codices and papyri, writing materials from daily life, with Greek, Latin, Coptic translations of the old sacred writings of the Law, the Prophets and the new writings of St. Paul, the evangelists and others with apostolic authority did appear and quickly spread over the ancient Christian world. All these Holy Scriptures, whether translated Hebrew Scriptures or newly written New Testament writings in Greek, had a single purpose from the perspective of many early Christians: to testify to the risen Christ and to make the Logos present and bring the Logos into the human words and human worlds wherever the Word of God travelled, coming to them not as a distant stranger, exotic, in foreign clothing and speaking in a foreign tongue, but becoming a Jew for the Jews and a Greek for the Greek. The Logos that was born as Mary's son, incarnate in her flesh, was believed to be the same Logos that the (translated) Holy Scriptures testified to and were filled with, as in this fresco "the Madonna about to give birth" by the 14th century painter Vitale of Bologna:

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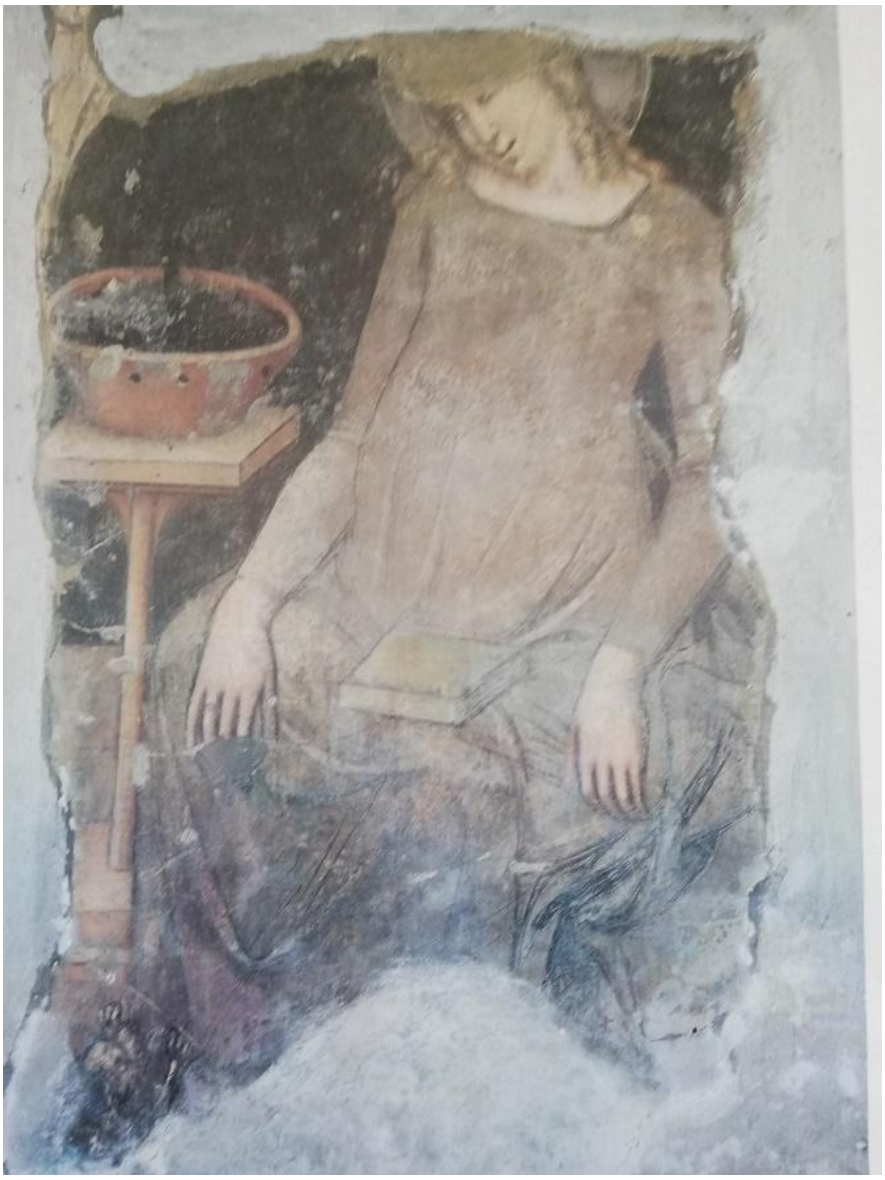
18) David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, 279.

Figure 2. The Madonna about to give birth by Vitale of Bologna



The Christian codices and also papyri with Holy Writings functioned in a largely oral liturgical setting in small congregations that gathered in homes of believers or in rented rooms where the shared food and the drink made the risen Christ present in their bodies and souls, representing the holy presence of the Christological reality to which their sacred Greek or Latin writings also testified.[19)]

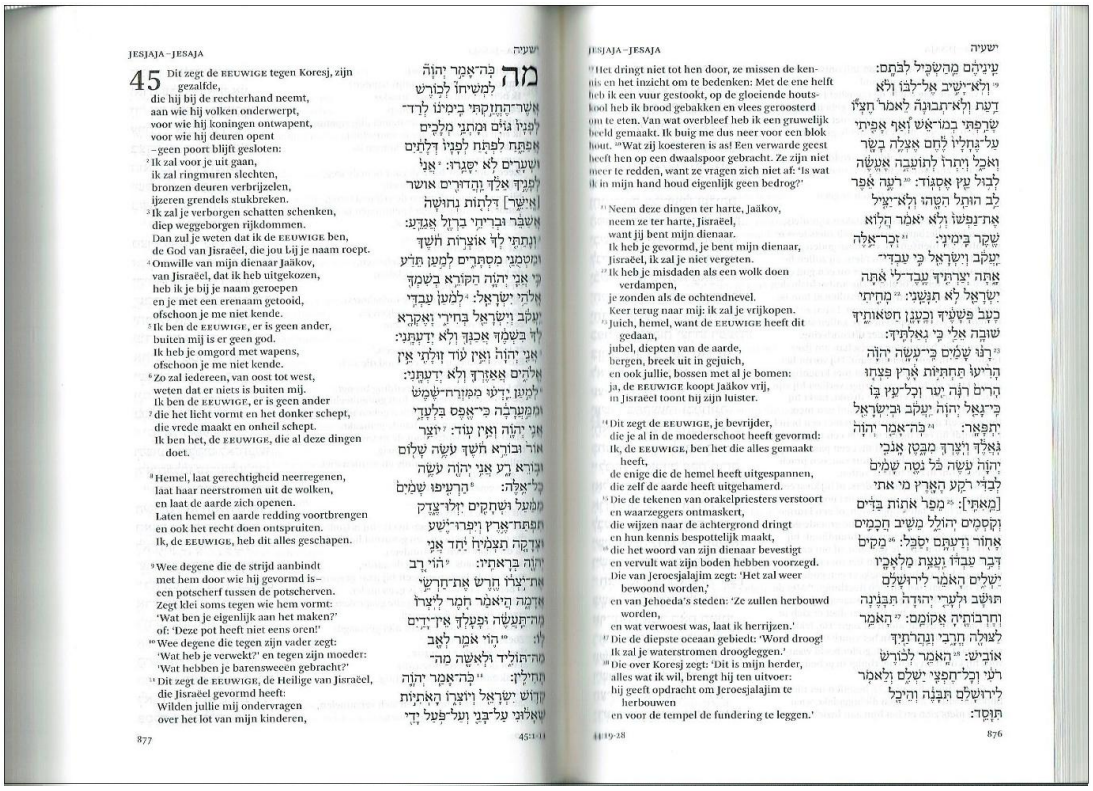
This actualization and translation process of the Word of God, the Logos, started in the New Testament and was continued by the Christian Church wherever it was planted: the written Word of God (witnessing to the Word-made-flesh), they

19) Ibid.

believed, needed to become incarnate again and again, it needed to be written on the tablets of the hearts. This belief that God wants to speak to us in the here and now through his Word, is one of the strongest recurring motivations in the history of Christian translations and retranslation of the Bible. Translation, therefore, is incarnation from this point of view, the Word is incarnated, and must be incarnated over and over again as it travels through place and time.

The *liturgical* actualization in translation is what sets Christian traditions to an extent apart from many faith communities within other world religions with Holy Books. The translated Holy Scriptures, from Vulgate to King James, have *replaced* the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures as the center of worship and liturgy in Christendom. When believers take the Bible with them to church, it is a translation and what they hear from the pulpit is a translation. In faith communities where the translation is just a fallible servant to the Hebrew or Greek Holy Text, translations may be allowed in the liturgy but always in audible or visible conjunction and subordination to the Holy Text. This may take for example the form of a two-column Bible with the Hebrew Holy Text in the center, the right column and the explanatory servant translation in the left periphery, as in this Tanach edition.

Figure 3. Hebrew Bible (MT) and Dutch Interconfessional Translation (NBV) in the Tanach edition



Clearly, Jewish and Islamic communities use translations of their Holy Books but these translations tend to have a different place and function (skopos):[20] they are secondary explanatory texts for the lay people that serve the Holy Texts in Hebrew or Arabic and that as a rule do not replace the Holy Texts in Hebrew or Arabic *in the liturgy* or as a text that speaks with divine authority.

In fact, many religious leaders in the history of Jewish and Islamic faith communities were concerned about the danger that a mere human and fallible translation would become the Word of God for their people, and would be central text in the liturgy of mosque or synagogue. That is why the rabbis in the Diaspora tolerated and appreciated the Aramaic *Targumim* translations but only as servants who have to know their place. These servants should never strive to replace their master, the Holy Writ in Hebrew or Arabic in the liturgical and spiritual center. "Many of the rules that were given for the delivery of the Targum were intended to keep the reading of Scripture in Hebrew, and its Aramaic translation, strictly apart."[21] The secondary place of the translation is reflected for example in the rule that the translation could only be read out after the reading of the Hebrew scroll was finished, and the reader of the translation was not allowed to look at the Hebrew scroll.[22]

In some times and places the translation was only tolerated in oral form, and when in later times written Aramaic translations appeared it was often not allowed to bring them into the synagogue.[23] Only in exceptional cases, in faraway places, as with the Yemenite Jews, Aramaic translations gradually received a honored status as beloved holy books that could fulfill liturgical roles.[24]

In liberal Jewish communities, translations of the Hebrew Bible may have more central roles in the life and liturgy of their faith communities than in more orthodox communities. So the picture is nuanced. In the Christian world, the Latin Vulgate, originally a servant of the Greek LXX master, became so honored and gained such immense authority that it started to function as a Holy Text in

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20) See C. Nord, *Translation as a Purposeful Activity* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997).
21) P. S. Alexander, "The Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of the Targum", 1985, J. A. Emerton, ed., *Congress Volume Salamanca* (Leiden: Brill, 1983); H. Sysling, "Translation techniques in the Ancient Bible translations: Septuagint and Targum", 294.
22) Ibid.
23) Brennan Breed, "What Are the Earliest Versions and Translations of the Bible?".
24) Ibid.

the liturgy that needed its own explanatory translations or glosses in Dutch or English. In many Catholic congregations the Latin Vulgate no longer functions as dominant liturgical text. At the same time, for some Protestant faith communities in the United States' Bible Belt, the King James Version has become the center of worship and the basis for theologizing, in a role similar to the Vulgate in mediaeval Christianity. Evidence for this sacralisation of the King James is a fierce resistance to retranslations, newer English versions, even very literal ones.

But mainstream Christianity continues the old ways of the very first Jewish Christians and of the writers of the New Testament, the deep conviction that the Logos, the Word of God, does not depend on a single language or a single "Holy Translation", a tradition of translating that is rooted in an incarnational theology of Scripture, language and translation, driven by the deeply felt need of actualization.

5. Conclusions

This paper addressed the question why retranslation of the Bible, even when other contemporary translations are available, plays such a central role in the history of Christian Bible translation. It was argued with David M. Carr and others that the ways in which New Testament writers interacted with what we now call the Old Testament reflects that for them "The holiness resided not in the written text or the language in which it was written but in the Christological reality to which it witnessed".[25] The actualization motive is shown not only by the fact that the translated Greek Scriptures are quoted in the vast majority of the New Testament quotations and allusions but also in the way in which the quoted Greek passages are recontextualized and adapted to make them speak to actual issues and contexts of the New Testament writers. The writers of the New Testament followed intertextual practices that are also found in other Hellenistic Jewish communities of the intertestamental period.

Early Christians continued this model of interaction with the holy writings of

25) David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, 279.

the Old Testament: the Greek translations also testified faithfully to the Christ, and accordingly acquired a central place as Holy Writ in liturgy and as a basis for theological reflection.

This actualizing interaction with holy writing forms the basis for Christian traditions of (re)translating the Bible. If translated holy texts are believed to be the Word of God and to speak with divine authority to every new generation of believers, retranslation becomes a must, not just when translations are aging and become harder to understand but also to retranslate for special audiences, function or needs, from common language versions to literary and liturgical versions, in all available media and formats offered in the digital age.

<Keywords>
Incarnation, Bible translation, actualization, retranslation, liturgy.

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<Abstract>

Retranslations of Holy Scriptures: Why Keep Translating the Bible?

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Why are there so many retranslations of the Bible and why accept Christians Bible translations rather than Hebrew or Greek texts as authoritative texts in the center of their spiritual and liturgical life? This is because Christianity, from its very beginnings and because of its deep roots in Hellenistic Judaism a translational religion, was driven by motives of actualization, especially liturgical actualization through translation: the Word, the Logos was believed to need incarnation in the linguistic and cultural worlds which it encountered during its long and still unfinished journey through the world.

The actualization motive was already behind the Aramaic and Greek translations of Hebrew Scripture in the centuries before Christ. Sysling in his study of translation techniques in Old Greek and Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Scriptures concludes “that they all try to actualize Scripture, interpreting it and applying it to their own historical and religious situation and time”.[26] For example, the Aramaic Targum Neofiti on Genesis 10:10 replaces the geographical names with contemporary ones that the new audience could relate to: “And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Edessa, Nisibis, and Ctesiphon in the land of Babel” rather than “Babel, Erech and Accad, all of them in the land of Sinear” as in Hebrew Scripture.[27]

The *liturgical* actualization in translation is what sets Christian traditions to a great extent apart from many faith communities within other world religions with Holy Books. The translated Holy Scriptures, from Vulgate to King James, replaced the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Scriptures as the center of worship and liturgy in Christendom. These translations function as Holy Texts, with authority, in the center of our worship services.

The translational nature of Christianity and the actualization motive are

26) H. Sysling, “Translation techniques in the Ancient Bible translations: Septuagint and Targum”, 280.
27) Ibid., 303.

already clearly visible in the writings of the New Testament in their dealings with Hebrew Scriptures. The earliest Christian communities centered on the veneration of Jesus Christ, the "Word made flesh". They read, quoted, and alluded to the sacred writings of what we now call the Hebrew Bible in Greek, and for them, these ancient Greek Scriptures were filled with Christ. For them, "The holiness resided not in the written text or the language in which it was written but in the Christological reality to which it witnessed"[28].

28) David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, 279.